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REVIEWS.

Social Theory. A Grouping of Social Facts and Principles. By JOHN BASCOM. T. Y. Crowell & Co., pp. xv+550. \$1.75.

THIS book is full of a pedagogical sententiousness that may be serviceable in teaching undergraduates, but it necessarily exposes its author to the distrust of his peers. A writer may express opinions upon difficult questions in such decisive form that doubt is created about his right to any opinion at all. An author may pass judgment upon so many difficult questions in succession that readers are made to query whether the profoundest investigations of any of them can have been taken into the calculation.

The first suspicion which the table of contents creates is that unwarranted liberties have been taken with the term *Sociology*. The five parts into which the volume is divided profess to treat in turn of "Customs," "Economics," "Civics," "Ethics," and "Religion," each "as a factor in Sociology." In no single instance has the treatment conformed to the title. The factors named have been treated almost exclusively in their relations to social action, which is an entirely distinct affair. The nearest approach to any exception is in the division on Economics, but even here the fault remains.

The second suspicion is that in the use of the terms just mentioned the author has fixed on a very superficial classification of "forms of organic force," which he deals with as though they were different kinds of organic force. He nowhere penetrates below the surface to discover the nature of the energy which operates through these forms. He does not seem to realize that "customs," for example, are not separable from the other "forms," except in degree. He has built his whole treatment upon a division according to external traits of social actions, instead of discovering the radical principles of actions.

It is perhaps not surprising that the author treats of the family under the head of "customs." When we find, however, that in the same division he treats of "The Negro Problem," "Amusements," "Reform," and "The Press," we begin to question, if we did not

before, the assumed law of association. We find that the author has unconsciously passed from the consideration of "customs" in the ethnographic sense, to "habit" in the most general psychological sense, and it is consequently a considerable feat of self-restraint on the part of Professor Bascom to have refrained from discussing in this division all the social phenomena to which the rest of the book refers. They are surely not less liable to the influence of habit than the sample activities mentioned in this division.

A third suspicion gathers force with the beginning of Part III, "Civics as a Factor in Sociology," viz., that for the sake of a mechanical classification the author has inextricably entangled the distinctions which he has undertaken to simplify. I can make nothing but confusion out of these two sentences on the same page (289): "Civics discusses the forms and the development of the state, its functions, the duties and rights of the citizen in reference to it, and its duties and rights in reference to the citizen." . . . "Civics lies between Custom and Economics on the one hand, and Ethics and Religion on the other." My perplexity increases when I read on the next page: "The pure moral impulses that spring up in Ethics and Religion encounter in Civics the inertia and the momentum alike of a slow, continuous, universal evolution," etc. Professor Bascom should have published a key to this peculiar dialect, so that his readers might be able to find out when he is talking about conduct, and when about the sciences which deal with certain relations of conduct.

A fourth suspicion gathers strength with each page of the volume, viz., that the appearance of system in treatment is a logical illusion. There is method and order most rigorously sustained throughout, but the structure is essentially arbitrary. Who could guess, for example, whether the same or different divisions of the book contain the following groups of topics?—(1) The Labor Movement; Coöperation; Profit-Sharing; Saving and Loan Associations; Gains of Workmen. (2) Injustices of Taxation; Principles on which Taxes should be Laid; Forms of Taxes; Indirect Taxes. It so happens that Professor Bascom discusses the former group in the division "Economics" and the latter in the division "Civics," but it would not have strained his method perceptibly if he had arranged to reverse the situation, or if he had transferred both groups to the division "Ethics."

In a word, the book contains a wealth of edifying discourse upon a multitude of subjects, but the dignity of these miscellaneous observa-

tions and their methodical arrangement no more gives them philosophical coherence than piling bricks in artistic shapes transforms them into crystals. Mr. Herbert Spencer was pleased to communicate a large assortment of his personal opinions as *Ethics*, notably in the second volume of the *Principles*. Professor Bascom chooses to distinguish his opinions on similar subjects as *Sociology*. In both cases the opinions are well worth printing. In each case, however, the significance of the opinion is incidental to the demonstration that the author has not succeeded in proving the opinions to be sanctioned by the science invoked.

Some men are at present engaged in working out a philosophy of society. They call their desideratum Sociology. Other men, or the same men at other times, are trying to decide what conduct in society is most rational at the present moment. Solutions of problems in the latter field may and must be assumed for daily guidance, whether the former task is accomplished or not. It is meanwhile to be deplored that men who write books are not willing to contribute frankly to the one series of problems or to the other, allowing those contributions to stand on their merits, without attempting to borrow authority from assumptions about the other series. In order to secure sanctions for his dogmatism on problems of conduct Professor Bascom has followed the policy: "Assume a Sociology if you have it not." The effect of such policy is the reverse of that intended.

ALBION W. SMALL.

Practical Christian Sociology. A series of special lectures before Princeton Theological Seminary and Marietta College, with supplemental notes and appendixes. By REV. WILBUR F. CRAFTS, PH. D. Funk & Wagnalls Co. 12mo., pp. 512, \$1.50.

MR. CRAFTS is a stalwart specimen of the "reformer born." In all his work he furnishes ample exhibit of the virtues and the vices of the type. In the first place it is very hard for him to tell the truth without telling more than the truth. For example, he permits Mr. Joseph Cook, on the first page of his introduction, to allude to Maine, the state of his birth, in these words: "A state in which in all his childhood he saw neither saloon nor drunkard." The writer spent his childhood in the same state, at the same time, and, while he might accept in a qualified sense the statement about saloons, the rest of the assertion tends to create an impression so incorrect that it seriously dis-